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SUBJECT: APRIL 16 TAO PRESS BRIEFING: HU-SIEW MEETING, DIRECT  
FLIGHTS, CROSS-STRAIT TOURISM, 1992 CONSENSUS, POSSIBLE CROSS-STRAIT  
VISITS, TIBET, PERSONNEL, MORE

Summary

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¶1. Key points at the April 16 Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) press briefings were:

-- The April 12 Hu-Siew meeting has "very important significance" for the improvement of cross-Straits relations under "new circumstances" (xin xingshi) and the promotion of cross-Straits economic cooperation.

-- President Hu said that "an important, historical opportunity" has emerged in cross-Straits relations and in these "new circumstances," regular direct and charter flights across the Strait will begin as soon as possible.

-- China advocates a return to "relevant cross-Straits negotiations" based on the 1992 Consensus.

-- Li had no information regarding the identity of the new head of the Mainland's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), nor did Li have any news on "further arrangements" for a possible visit from the chairman-designate of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), P.K. Chiang.

-- While there is no "difference" in the territorial sovereignty aspect of China's stance on the Tibet and Taiwan issues, the issues stem from different historical causes and realities and thus require different handling, said Li. End Summary.

Hu-Siew Meeting, cross-Straits Tourism, Direct Flights

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¶2. At the April 16 regular Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) press briefing, TAO spokesman Li Weiwei stated that President Hu Jintao's April 12 meeting with Taiwan VP-elect Vincent Siew bears "very important significance" for the improvement of cross-Straits relations under "new circumstances" (xin xingshi) and the promotion of cross-Straits economic cooperation. Li pointed out that domestic and foreign reactions to the meeting were positive, and the meeting received a "high degree of affirmation" from "all circles of Taiwan."

¶3. During the meeting, President Hu said that "an important, historical opportunity" has emerged in cross-Straits relations and cross-Straits economic development and that the two sides will "work hard together, create conditions (chuangzao tiaojian) and actively push forward," said Li when asked for comment on Ma Ying-jeou's assertion that regular weekend charter flights between the Mainland and Taiwan would begin July 4. Li told reporters that Hu's statement "pertains to cross-Straits charter and direct flights." As long as the two sides work hard together on this issue, the TAO believes that in the "new state of affairs" regular direct and charter flights across the Strait will be begin as soon as possible.

¶4. Li repeated the above statements referring to the Hu-Siew

meeting when asked if the ARATS and the SEF will carry out negotiations on charter flights and cross-Strait tourism, adding that the "corresponding groundwork" and "conditions" have been "already completed." A reporter asked if this answer meant that after May 20 (the date of Ma Ying-jeou's inauguration as President of Taiwan) the "groundwork" would be "completed." Li avoided answering the question.

#### Can Discuss Anything on Basis of 1992 Consensus

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15. In a return to cross-Strait negotiations on equal footing on the basis of the 1992 Consensus, any topic can be discussed, said Li when asked if the two sides could possibly discuss political issues in addition to economic ones. Asked if the Mainland's interpretation (biaoshu) of the 1992 Consensus had changed since last year, Li stated that the Mainland's position is "very clear: We advocate a return to relevant cross-Strait negotiations on the basis of the 1992 Consensus."

#### New ARATS, SEF Chiefs, DPP officials to Visit Mainland?

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16. Li had no information regarding the identity of the new head of the Mainland's ARATS. Li did not have any news on "further arrangements" for a possible visit from SEF chairman-designate P.K. Chiang, when asked if Chiang might meet with TAO Director Chen Yunlin during a visit to the Mainland. China welcomes the "vast majority" of DPP members to visit the Mainland under the "appropriate titles," said Li when asked if China would allow visits from DPP county- and municipal-level mayors. Li added that many DPP members have already visited the Mainland.

#### Different Treatment of Tibet and Taiwan Issues?

BEIJING 00001450 002 OF 002

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17. Responding to a Voice of America reporter's question regarding the different "attitudes" toward Tibet and Taiwan, both of which are called "inseparable parts" of Chinese territory, the spokesman said he did not understand the her use of the term "different attitudes." There is no "difference" in China's clear stance on protecting the completeness of China's territorial sovereignty, Li stated. However, the problems of these two places stem from different historical causes and realities, thus requiring that they be handled differently, he added.

#### Olympics, Ministry of Justice Exam, Pandas, Personnel, Economic Cooperation, Mainland Investment in Taiwan

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18. The spokesman also took questions on the ability of Taiwan athletes and fans to attend the Beijing Olympic Games, the possibility of changing the names of two Pandas identified as pending gifts to Taiwan (their names, put together, mean "reunification"), prospects for the further development of cross-Strait economic cooperation and Mainland investment in Taiwan. Ding Li of the Ministry of Justice introduced preparations for opening Ministry of Justice examinations to Taiwan lawyers and other residents. Li had no news to offer when asked about Taiwan media reports that Minister of Commerce Chen Deming and Yang Hui of the PLA General Staff Headquarters have joined the CCP Central Committee Leading Group on Taiwan Affairs.